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ABSTRACT

Professional development should be part of a teacher's job, and schools should make teacher development an integral part of the teacher's normal activities. Because schools are cooperative, collaborative enterprises, teachers should be involved in the establishment of development programs, should have professional responsibility for cooperating with each other to improve practice, and should not be made to compete for rewards. Development programs should eliminate such barriers to teachers' development efforts as (1) funding shortages that deny teachers both in-school time for development and adequate resources for study and professional interaction, and (2) assumptions that teachers should take responsibility for development individually. Examples of methods that fit the criteria suggested include those used in the Scheney High School Teacher Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the employment of teachers as mentors rather than as "master teachers"; the engagement of a nonprofessional support staff to leave teachers free for professional concerns; the rescheduling of school time; and perhaps the coordination of in- and out-of-school time for development. The program should be more concerned with enhancing the teacher's professionalism than his/her specific technical skills, should involve an element of accountability, and should focus on pedagogy. (PGD)

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School-Focused Development of Teachers On-the-Job

Outline of remarks delivered by

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at the Fall Conference of the Council of the Great City Schools

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 20, 1985.

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I have modified the original topic a bit from "school based" to "school focused" teacher development. Why? Simply because all of what teachers may need and want for their further development while teaching may not always be "in the school" but, clearly, most of it will focus on their role in school. A modest, yet important, distinction in my judgment.

My general thesis is that the quality of a school's instructional program is influenced primarily by its teachers. Put another way, the effectiveness of a school's program is determined largely by the capacities of its teachers to help its students learn. In short, teachers are keys to what is the essential mission of the school, teaching and learning. That being the case, then ways and means to allow for the further development of the teachers' pedagogical capacities are investments for improving schools.

To create opportunities for teachers in schools to enhance their pedagogical capacities will call for the development of arrangements or structures, if you wish, in schools that allow for and promote systematic

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and sustained professional development of teachers. Whatever these arrangements or restructuring may be, they call for making professional development part of a teacher's job and part of the school system's responsibility. In short, professional development of teachers means two things: 1) it is part and parcel of a teacher's duties; and 2) it is the responsibility of the school and school system to make certain teachers can carry out such duties in the context of their work. This development cannot rely only on the voluntary commitments of teachers nor exist as an extra-curricular program in schools.

Rather, it calls for a collaborative process between teachers and the system (and, perhaps, with third parties in some cases, e.g., colleges, businesses) in determining both the arrangements and structure as well as the content of the teachers' professional development activities in schools.

Undergirding the establishment of any such arrangements and structure are certain assumptions:

1) teachers are the pedagogical decision-makers of the schools;

2) that being so, then teachers need to have a sufficient degree of pedagogical autonomy re specific choices of instructional materials (curriculum) and modes of instruction (methods) plus some role in the assessment of students--and that of themselves;

3) teachers, therefore, have an obligation to improve themselves and their peers and to improve the quality and effectiveness of the schools in which they serve;

4) school systems have an obligation to make certain that teachers can and will perform and further develop professionally;

5) teachers and school systems are jointly obligated to assure that teachers are currently knowledgeable about the academic areas in which they teach, about the relationship of those areas to other areas, about factors that influence learning, and about their students;

6) teachers have a responsibility as professionals to monitor the quality and performance of their peers. Put another way, they need to accept responsibility and be given opportunities for regulating professional standards - in terms of ethics and related behavior as well as those of performance; and,

7) school systems cannot allow teachers to function or behave in ways that are contrary to professional standards and ethics.

Also undergirding my focus--that of the school--are emerging bits and pieces of research findings about schools (e.g., from investigations of "effective" or "improving" schools--and even related findings from "successful" businesses as well). Briefly, these findings tell us that:

1) the school is the locus of teaching and learning;

2) persons who serve in schools, especially teachers, are the keys to the effectiveness (or quality) of that teaching and, consequently, that learning;

3) their participation in what a school does and how it does it is essential to the outcomes of schooling; and,

4) the character of their work needs to be collaborative or cooperative and not competitive. Why? Because school programs are hardly possible to "break out" into fully separate and accountable units (e.g., a course or a class in a high school even with all its departments, streams, tracks, and the like). Rather a school is made up of interrelated parts--each contributing to and relying on each other. It is as though each component is a musical instrument which makes up the orchestra to produce the concert of learning.

Given this latter point--namely, the need for a collaborative or cooperative climate for teachers and others in schools, I shall not discuss in any detail schemes for improving teachers that have competitive characteristics.

For example, merit pay generally creates competition in the workplace. In schools, it often pits a teacher against other teachers. Even if all teachers agree about who is meritorious and who is not, I claim that the

use of merit pay could be counter-productive for institutions--schools--that rely on cooperation. Also, guess whom parents would choose for their children--between the "meritorious" teacher and another who is not?

Further, and taking it too literally perhaps, the concept of a master teacher breeds competition. The idea that one's past performance, experience, education level, etc. adds up to a "master" may be so--but, a scheme of this kind could create a kind of hierarchy in the teaching ranks that urges competitiveness--in settings where cooperation ought to be the mode. In some cases "master teacher" schemes have been devised that limit the competition to a teacher with himself or herself. What's so different about schemes of this kind from what is already in place-- increments for education level, experience and--ah, yes--performance?

In any event, I shall not use the concepts of merit pay or master teacher as the basis for arranging school-focused teacher development. However, I will offer some examples of schemes that do rely on differentiation among teachers, but differentiation as to role rather than that of different degrees of effectiveness in a similar role.

The need is for arrangements or structures that allow for and foster professional development for teachers in schools. Such arrangements should provide opportunities for teachers to improve or, if you want me to put it another way, should take away excuses of teachers from improving themselves professionally.

Clearly, one could argue that, presently, many teachers have powerful arguments why they cannot improve. Many teachers work in schools where

neither time nor resources are available for their development on-the-job. You know these matters better than do I. For example:

- a teaching load that leaves little (if any) time in the school day for peer exchange, observation of other teachers, observation by other teachers, time to work on curricular matters, time to read, etc. This situation is often made worse because of added responsibility for non-instructional tasks, e.g., monitoring halls and cafeterias, writing administrative reports, non-instructional assignments, etc.

- the lack of space in which to study and to interact with others on instructional matters. Lack of access to such things as telephones, library resources, copying equipment, typewriters, and on and on. (What other executives do you know that don't have such access?)

Simply put, there are two major reasons for the absence of such time and such resources. The first is well known to you--namely, the inadequacy of funds to provide both. After all, time is money, space is money, materials and equipment are money. There just isn't enough money to buy the time and resources necessary for teacher development on-the-job. That's a harsh reality--one that is constant, perhaps, but one that needs to be changed.

The second reason is less visible, namely the prevailing notion about who is responsible for teacher development on-the-job. By and large, it is

assumed that it is up to the individual teacher himself or herself. We assume that, by and large, these professionals will keep themselves current about what they teach and how they teach; we assume that if they don't, they will suffer professionally--e.g., get less salary, lose their jobs.

To buttress this prevailing notion of individual responsibility, we have created incentives to foster it. For example, we pay more to teachers who further their formal education during out-of-school hours (courses and advanced degrees); we subsidize teacher centers for teachers to attend during out-of-school hours; we sometimes encourage them to attend and be paid for their attendance at summer workshops, weekend seminars, and the like--all during out-of-school hours; in some cases, we provide "professional visiting days" and sabbatical leaves which, taken literally, are on school time, but not really school focused.

Few other professionals, especially those who work in institutions and who are not self-employed, are expected to have so much responsibility for their further development. For professionals who work independently --e.g., lawyers, doctors, consulting engineers, private nurses, to name only a few--having such responsibility seems to work. That is, if they don't keep up, are not current, and the like, they suffer in the marketplace. Who among you would go to a doctor who practices blood-letting and uses leeches to do so; who among you would hire a lawyer to set up an estate who has not read the tax codes in the past five years?

But, for the teacher, the free market does not operate as fully. He or she is part of a staff. His or her performance is interlocked with that

of others. And while it is right to believe that any professional has an obligation to be on top of his or her craft, that alone is not sufficient.

All of this is simply to say that we need to rethink the matter of who is responsible for professional development on-the-job. Other institutions have done so: e.g., hospitals require doctors to attend seminars on hospital time--if not, they stand to lose their affiliation with the hospital; corporations provide--often mandate--education and training on-the-job for their executives, and certainly colleges do as well, by making committee assignments and the like a part of a faculty member's responsibility on-the-job.

In short, we need to rethink the notion--outdated, in my judgment--that, one, teachers are to be solely responsible for their development; and, two, they are to do so on their own time and not on "company time," so to speak.

Enough of this loosely coupled background. Let me now turn to some suggested forms--arrangements and structures, if you will--for teacher development on-the-job, development that is school-focused, if not always school-based.

What follows are merely illustrations or outlines of different arrangements. They are sketches and, therefore, are incomplete. Clearly, my treatment of them is not full. Also, there must be more options than those that follow. In any event, I sally forth.

1. Pittsburgh and its Schenley High School Teacher Center.

Here we are at Schenley, and you have seen it in operation. For that reason, I shall not labor this example, except to say that Schenley is a form consistent with my thesis of:

a) school focused and on-the-job time

b) system and teacher negotiated

c) sustained and supported by the system

d) systematic - not sporadic

e) obligated by participants (to attend) and systems (to carry out)

Putting it too briefly, the Schenley High School Teacher Center for high school teachers, and the newly established Brookline School Center for elementary school teachers, are akin to "teaching hospitals" in the medical world. In each, able and knowedgeable practitioners are engaged in guiding and assisting other practitioners to improve the practice of their particular craft, teaching mathematics or English, a science, and the like. Moreover, they are doing so in the context of a real school with regular students who are there to receive a high school education. As such, these students bring all of the kinds of problems and opportunities that teachers need to face and deal with throughout the school system. For those of you who want to know more about this city-wide teacher development program, one that is systematic and locally sustained, simply ask the Pittsburgh Public Schools to give you a set of descriptive materials.

2. Teachers as Mentors for Other Teachers.

This scheme is based on the premise that there are teachers in schools who have different and stronger capacities than others which can be nurtured and, in turn, used to help other teachers. Rather than a hierarchy of "master" teachers, this scheme creates categories of differentiation, that is, a new and different role for some teachers (mentors) all of whom would continue to teach, but whose special capacities would be made available to others. For an elaboration of this scheme, I refer you to a new report to us from the Academy for Educational Development which, at our request, reviewed our work and that of others in school staff development over the past couple of decades. It is titled, Teacher Development in Schools. The scheme is also one that is implicit in the plans of the Holmes Group of Deans, which represents some thirty schools of education in research universities. That group is currently engaged in developing programs to prepare cadres of teachers with special capacities--teachers the Group calls "professional career teachers."

Briefly, here are some examples of different kinds of mentor teachers that are used as examples in this report, Teacher Development in Schools:

a) teacher/scholar of subject matter

b) teacher/scholar of child or adolescent development

c) teacher/experimenter in pedagogical tactics

d) teacher/translator of research

e) teacher/counselor of pedagogy (also useful for training new teachers)

Common to each of these various kinds of mentor/teachers are the following:

1) Each is a peer of other teachers (we know from research that professionals of all kinds learn much of what they learn from peers);
2) each continues to teach (stays immersed in the "real" school world);
3) each has a special responsibility which he/she must use to help others; and
4) each has time and resources to carry out this assignment on-the-job.

How can this be done? Does it mean adding new money, new staff, etc.? Yes, to some degree, but not entirely. It would be possible, for example, to eliminate some central office supervisory positions and the resources that support them, and redeploy these funds to individual schools for "buying" time of mentors. The report speaks more fully to this possibility.

To my way of thinking, a scheme of this nature has advantages over the hierarchical scheme of "master" teachers, primarily because it makes distinct and identifiable differentiation about roles for teachers. Moreover, it builds capacity for teacher development on-the-job <u>in schools</u>--that is, closest to where the teachers are and where the help is needed.

3. Use of Other than Professional Staff.

Currently, many schools are using non-professional employees--and volunteers, in some cases--to perform tasks earlier carried out by teachers. Most of these tasks never required the levels and kind of education and training that most teacher have. For example:

- hall, cafeteria, and playground monitors
- clerical assistants
- aides in classroom to carry out non-instructional tasks.

But, some schools also use non-professional employees or volunteers for some instructional tasks--under the supervision of teachers or because teachers have made decisions to so use them. (This kind of scheme would continue the responsibility and the accountability of teachers for instructional affairs.) For example, the teacher could decide to call on these non-professional staff for:

- tutoring students (including students tutoring other students)
- correcting tests, papers, etc.
- reviewing homework assignments
- reading to students
- monitoring laboratory experiments.

Further, schools also use technology for instruction. Whether that technology is film, TV, radio or the computer is not of importance. Rather, the important matter is that technology is part of the instructional arsenal that teachers can decide to deploy.

In short, it is possible to conceive of schemes that make more extensive use of non-professional persons and technology under the direction of teachers in ways to find time for teachers to work on their own development. Remember, teachers are the pedagogical decision-makers, but that does not mean that teachers must necessarily or always be the deliverers of all instruction.

4. Changed Time Frames for Schools

Recent reports about schools have decried the lack of "time on task" in schools. I assume that means not using as much classroom time for the essentials of schools: teaching and learning. These reports speak about "interruptions" in this time for a variety of purposes, e.g., public address announcements, extra-curricular matters, administrative work, etc.

Some schools are trying out different time frames or schedules to keep separate these "other" matters from "time on task." In some, it is a full week's classes in four days. The fifth day for teachers is staff development; the fifth day for students is extra-curricular under the supervision of others (in school and out).

Other schools rearrange schedules in a similar way to have a half-day for other than classes. Again, doing in class in four and one-half days what is expected in five.

In any event, the idea of dividing class time (instruction, that is) from other non-instructional responsibilities is a start. I'm of the

belief that such schemes would not only find time for teacher development, but also would enhance and enrich those extra-curricular activities as well.

5. Coordinated In-and-Out-of-School Time for Development

This last option is something of a compromise with my view that teacher development is a company-time responsibility. Still, it may be a good starting point or a more realistic opportunity for now.

Simply put, it would be the development of a scheme that coordinates, if not integrates into a pattern, the current teacher development activities in school and out of school as well. For example, it might mean that modest arrangements could be made to help teachers in school on school time by finding professional space and resources (telephone, library, etc.) for whatever "out of class" time teachers have. I'd hope it would be more than that, but it would be coupled with transportation to the teachers center or to other staff development projects (if needed), vouchers for evening meals for teachers who are seeking help among themselves with after-school workshops, a more deliberate pattern of sending teachers to outside seminars, workshops, summer institutes--not always relying on volunteers or choices made on an ad hoc basis.

I won't elaborate further for I think you get the point. Your teachers and your schools already are engaged in various forms of teacher development on-the-job, some or all of which is school focused. The intent of this option is simply to coordinate them in

some way so that the various parts are more systematically related to one another. 'Tis but a modest start, but a start, nonetheless.

* * * *

Let me close with a few guidelines for planning and building more systematic and sustained arrangements for school-focused teacher development on-the-job.

1. The nature of the activities develops from what teachers are expected to know and to do in the context of their roles as teachers. Planning such activities requires a collaborative effort between school authorities and school staff--that is, teachers.

2. The activities ought to be more "education" than "training," that is, they ought to be more broadly professional than narrowly technical. For example, activities that help teachers understand the way in which children learn to read rather than instruction on how to apply a particular reading program. Undergirding this assertion is the premise that if teachers know more about how children learn to read, they will be better able to judge what approach to reading is best suited for what youngsters. Remember, they are the pedagogical decision-makers.

3. Much of the development can be accomplished by teachers helping teachers. Teacher development on-the-job need not always require others, e.g., from the central office or the college or university or the training agency. Some activities

will need such outside assistance, but the need for it should come out of the plan rather than be assumed as being the plan.

4. Teacher development on-the-job ought to become a regular ongoing activity of a school. It should become as common to a school as are classes for students.

5. A major goal for this development ought to be that of professional accountability. Put another way, if teachers are to participate in the determination of what the activities are and be engaged in them--as "teachers" and as "peer students," if you will, it follows they will be accountable for the outcomes--in terms of better pedagogy, if not always improved learning.

6. The focus of these activities ought to be, unashamedly, on pedagogy--the art and science of teaching. That requires both knowledge--of subjects, of skills, of students, of contexts, of learning, of instructional technology--and practice--of trying out, of testing, of critiquing one's self and one's peers and dealing with the outcomes of such analyses.

Perhaps the day will come when we can truly test something I believe is well worth testing, namely that -

If the school is a learning place for teachers, it will be a learning place for students.